

**July 27, 2006 Minutes of
Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee**

Members present: John Bourquin, Phil Hanson, Paul Guerrant, Darrel Coverdell, Shelley Gonzales, Clarice Ryan

The doors were locked at the church so the meeting was moved to the picnic tables behind the Bethany Lutheran Church. Chairman Bourquin called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM and called for approval of the agenda. Paul Guerrant moved the agenda be accepted as presented. Phil Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes for the June 26, 2006 Regular Meeting were approved as mailed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Steering Committee Report:

Shelley Gonzales reported the Steering Committee has received the reply from Land Use Consultant Lisa Horowitz. She has reviewed the draft and made several suggestions for compliance to the Flathead County Growth Policy Draft and suggested more data be added to the transportation section. The Flathead County GIS department will produce maps (42" X 42") and will overlay as much data to identify sensitive areas as possible. Horowitz also recommended producing an inventory of zoning designations including the total number of acres in those designations.

The completed draft document will then be printed with copies made available to BLUAC. Both Bigfork Steering Committee and BLUAC will schedule public meetings for presentation of the draft document. Following the public comment period, the document will be forwarded to the Flathead County Planning Department for further review before being sent to the Commission for approval.

Shelley noted there was an application soon to reach BLUAC for a zone change on a 14-acre tract West of the VFW asking for a zone change from SAG 5 to R1.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bigfork Water & Sewer District:

Julie Spencer, representing Bigfork Water & Sewer District gave a report on the status of capacity of the system. She began with a history of the district. The original system was installed 100 years ago. In the 1960's a steel tank was installed near Lake View Care Center where river water was pumped for storage and chlorination. In the 1980's the Bigfork Water & Sewer District was established. In the 26 years since the district was established, the district has worked on addressing the leakage in the system's concrete transmission lines, installing more updated materials. In the 1990's, two new wells were installed in the system (275' and 300' deep), plus a new storage tank. With the new wells, none of the water is chlorinated as it meets DEQ standards for purity.

Today's water usage was 1.5 million gallons for a 25-hour period. Average summer usage is 1.6 M gallons. Winter average 24-hour usage is between 200,000 and 300,000 gallons. The district has ongoing investigations to find areas where individuals have tapped into the main water line for irrigation purposes. Those located are now metered.

The district anticipates building another 750,000-gallon storage tank. They have an option to purchase property on the Pearce property for install another storage tank. The district is looking for funding for the \$50,000 purchase of the property.

The district now serves 1,100 customers, including irrigation accounts. Summer months create the greatest hardship for the system. Priorities include maintaining pressure to fire hydrants. Elevations are one of the limitations to the systems gravity flow for new hook ups. At present there is no storage facility on the south side of Swan River. The Quarter Circle development will install storage tanks for the system on the south side.

Bourquin asked what would happen when all the proposed/approved lots want to hook up to the system. Spencer noted the District is in the process of developing Impact Fees for new hook-ups.

As to the Sewer facility, Spencer noted that in the 1960's the citizens were concerned about all the septic tanks and water quality in Bigfork Bay. An experiment where red dye was flushed down toilets in the area turned the bay red. Thus, the beginning of a sewer treatment system in Bigfork. In 1964 the system was completed. The two lift stations for that system are now 40 years old. Treated water is discharged into the Swan River. DEQ standards continue to get more stringent for water discharged into the river.

The new treatment plant was completed in 1986. The capacity for the system is 500,000 gal. per day. The June rains put considerable stress on the system. On July 4th, a total flow of 465,000 gal. caused an overflow in the system before disinfectant was accomplished. Summer average flow has been 300,000 gal. per day.

Because permitting from DEQ is site specific, it will be necessary to maintain the plant at its present location. To gain area for expansion of the treatment plant, the district is considering moving the office and shop off site. It takes a full year to receive a permit from DEQ for expansion. A new plant will cost \$7 to \$8 million and would double the capacity to 1 million gallons. Infiltration of ground water is also adding problems for the system, as well as storm run off. Many of the older storm drain systems do not work. In older areas, there are problems with people building decks or other structures on easements for the water and sewer lines. This could create a problem for access and result in removal of some structures and legal recourse.

Spencer noted that if the district reaches capacity, there would be a moratorium on all hook-ups. The district has notified all large developments of the situation. She also informed the Committee that developers are not required by the County to notify Bigfork Water & Sewer District of development plans. BWS collects a plant investment fee on all new connections. When the new plant is installed, all lots, including undeveloped lots, will be assessed.

The BWS has been working cooperatively with the Woods Bay Sewer project. They will have the same issue of getting a discharge permit from DEQ. There are 1,200 lots that could be served by the Woods Bay district. Funding is also an issue for Woods Bay. When considering permits for sewer treatment systems, the DEQ does not take into consideration faulty septic systems. If Woods Bay is unable to obtain permitting, they are considering connecting to Bigfork's system.

Spencer suggested the water and sewer issue may slow growth down. A resort tax could be the answer to funding a larger system.

Since BWS is not notified of new developments, Spencer asked to be notified of any new application for projects.

Bigfork School District:

Russ Kinser, Superintendent of Bigfork Schools gave a presentation of the current and projected growth of the school system. Kinser provided three charts: (1) Bigfork School District Enrollment Statistics (1993-2006), (2) Flathead Co. 10 year comparison of enrollment (1996 to 2005), and (3) 2005-2030 Elementary Projection Comparison.

Elementary & High School District enrollment for 2005-06 totals 863.5 (492.5 elementary & 371 high school). Projections take into account the mobility factor at 25% (the number of students moving in and out of the district during the school year). The number of elementary students in Montana, as well as the United States, is declining.

The chart for Flathead County Schools shows a decline in elementary enrollment of 15% for a 10-year period, high school 1% for the same period. Projections to the year 2030 vary from 657 to 695 elementary enrollment and 487 to 494 high school students.

The 25-year projection chart is based on the U.S. Census projections. Kinser also noted that population increase eventually creates an economic base to support schools.

When asked about the room requirements for the facility, Kinser noted that because of the older design of the school, rooms must be divided or other space found to meet the requirements of State and Federal Special Programs (example: No Child Left Behind). At this time, every room is now utilized. One

of the programs to attract younger teachers is the staff day care. He commented the addition has definitely worked to attract teachers to the area.

Kinser added that, because of space requirements for special programs, it would not take much increase in enrollment to put the school district in trouble. An additional 25 high school students or an additional 25 to 30 elementary students would create a space availability problem for the existing school facilities. An example was changing Kindergarten to a full day. The room originally used for half-day classes is now divided into thirds to accommodate the 60 students enrolled. The new development in the Somers area would put approximately 2/3 of students in the Bigfork High School District. The district has also studied a 12 month-Quarter Semester program and determined the operational costs outweigh the advantages.

The Superintendent also informed the Committee that an architectural firm has been hired to do an analysis of the facility and offer suggestions for modifying the existing facility. The study should be completed by late October or November.

OLD BUSINESS:

John Bourquin reported receiving an email from Kirsten Holland from the Flathead Planning Office, which stated there were no copies of the April Revised Bylaws in that office.

Bourquin also reported his conversation with Chief Deputy County Attorney Jonathan Smith regarding BLUAC members meeting outside regular meetings. Smith gave three opinions:

1. Do not discuss future applications
2. It is not illegal but it is the "perception" that may raise legal issues.
3. Site reviews may not be visited by 2 or more members with the exception of a one-time training session for new members.

Bourquin clarified with Flathead County Planning Director, Jeff Harris, on the issue of approval or denial of applications where BLUAC felt conditions needed to be added to the proposal. His advice was if the majority of the Committee like the project and felt it needed minor conditions, the Committee should approve the application with those conditions. If the Committee felt there were many conditions or problems with the application, the project should be denied with comments explaining the disapproval.

The Committee discussed the idea of posting the agenda for BLUAC prior to each meeting. It was generally agreed this was a good idea to increase public awareness. Suggestions for posting were the news media (Bigfork Eagle and Lakeshore County Journal), the BSC website (with permission from BSC), the BSC email list (with permission of BSC) and the regular posting places determined by BLUAC Policies & Procedures.

Draft Bylaws:

A draft copy of the current Bylaws with suggested changes noted in different colors to differentiate from the original were distributed to members by email. The committee covered the entire document, page by page, noting approval, changes and additions to the draft. Copies of the final draft will be available at the August 31, 2006 meeting for consideration by BLUAC.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Sue Hanson
Secretary

Announcements:

Next meeting: August 31, 2006 4:00 PM at Bethany Lutheran Church

Flathead County Planning Board Public Hearing on Flathead Growth Policy will be held on August 8 & 10, 2006, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Red Lion Inn in Kalispell.